

In the Claims:

5 1. A computer implemented artwork management system for distributing
and controlling artwork in a computer system, comprising:

10 an information collection system for compiling pre-mechanical
specification information according to a predefined procedure from a
plurality of agents to create a data file;

15 a coordination system connected to said information collection system
for creating a mechanical artwork design data file incorporating said
specification information and identifying an internal or an external
agent for creating said mechanical artwork, reviewing said mechanical
artwork, and routing said mechanical artwork according to a
predefined procedure;

20 a reviewing system connected to said coordination system for
compiling, exchanging and reviewing information from a plurality of
agents concerning said mechanical artwork data file according to a
predefined procedure;

25 an approval system connected to said organization system for
evaluating said critical information contained in said data file,
requesting changes to said mechanical artwork, and approving said
mechanical artwork for production according to a predefined
procedure;

a production system connected to said review system for assigning approved mechanical artwork by transmitting said data file to at least one external agent for production;

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wherein said plurality of internal agents communicate using an internal data transmission and computer system and communicate with said at least one external agent using an external data transmission and computer system which is separated from said internal computer system by a control device; and

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wherein all internal data files uploaded to said external computer by said internal agents are automatically replicated on said external computer system as external data files which duplicate said internal data files.

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2. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein said information system has an information collection facility and a project creation facility.

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3. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 2 wherein said information collection facility includes information selected from the group consisting of product ingredients, packaging components, regulatory information, and product design elements.

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4. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein said coordination system includes functions selected from the

group consisting of indicating when information collection is complete, indicating when mechanical production is complete, and exchanging work status information with agents.

5 5. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein said review system includes functions selected from the group consisting of polling agents for approval, denial, or comments; authenticating agents' input using electronic signatures, exchanging information between agents, and allowing sub-agents to submit comments.

10 6. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein said production system includes functions selected from the group consisting of indicating when the external production facility has received their assignment, and archiving said data file in said internal computer system.

15 7. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein said internal data files include one or more databases selected from the group consisting of logos, design elements, names and addresses of agents, master pick list values, product and regulatory information, archives of product artwork and packaging configurations and workflow information.

20 25 8. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein transmission of data between internal and external agents is implemented by web browser software and the Internet.

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9. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein authentication of identity of internal and external agents is required for access to said management system.
- 5 10. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein said external data files include one or more databases selected from the group consisting of names and addresses of agents, master pick list values, and workflow information.
- 10 11. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein internal agents include agents with approval authority and agents without approval authority.
- 15 12. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein the list of agents with access to any data file residing in said information, organization, and review systems can be varied for different artwork projects.
13. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein said data file has a status label indicating its review status among a predefined set of agents.
- 20 14. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein said data file includes at least one project information text file and at least one graphics file.
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15. The computer implemented artwork management system of claim 1 wherein any of said authorized agents may see the review status of said mechanical at any time.

5 16. A method for distributing and controlling artwork in a computer system, comprising:

10 collecting pre-mechanical specification information according to a predefined procedure from a plurality of agents to create a data file;

15 creating an artwork production scheme incorporating said pre-mechanical specification information;

15 identifying an internal or an external agent for producing mechanical artwork;

20 approving said mechanical artwork according to a predefined procedure;

25 transmitting said mechanical artwork to a production facility according to a predefined procedure;

compiling critical information between a plurality of internal and external agents concerning said mechanical artwork according to a predefined procedure;

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exchanging critical information between a plurality of internal and external agents concerning said mechanical artwork according to a predefined procedure;

5 wherein said plurality of internal agents communicate use an internal data transmission and computer system and communicate with said at least one external agent using an external data transmission and computer system which is separated from said internal computer system by a control device; and

10 wherein all mechanical artwork information contained in internal data files uploaded to said external computer by said internal agents are automatically replicated on said external computer system as external data files which duplicate said internal data files.

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